

**The meaning
of
la 'iilah
iilaa Allah'**

**Muhammad
ibn Abd al-Wahhab**

The meaning of
[La 'ilah 'ilaa Allah]
[There is no god but Allah]

معنى لا إله إلا الله

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Translator's introduction

All praise is due to Allah; we praise Him and seek His forgiveness.

We seek refuge in Allah from the evils of our souls and the wickedness of our deeds.

He, whom Allah guides, none can misguide him, and he whom He misguides, none can guide him.

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, alone, without partner.

His is the dominion and His is the praise.

He gives life and causes death, and He is over all things competent. Now then:

I have translated the book before you, entitled (**The meaning of there is no god but Allah**[**la 'ilah 'ilaa Allah**]) by (**Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab**) because of the many benefits and advantages it contains for the Muslim.

This translation is my own effort. If I do well, it is from Allah and His guidance to me, and if I make a mistake, it is from myself and from Satan.

I ask Allah to make this work of mine purely for Him and to spread the word of truth throughout the entire earth and to teach Muslims who do not speak Arabic their religion that Allah has chosen for them.

The one in need of his Lord's forgiveness: **Omar bin Ahmed Tohamy**.

What is meant by saying there is no god but Allah [la 'ilah 'ilaa Allah]?

This is a letter from Sheikh al-Islam Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in which he answers a question about the meaning of "There is no god but Allah" [la 'ilah 'ilaa Allah].

Praise be to Allah and prayers and peace be upon His Prophet. The Sheikh was asked about the meaning of "There is no god but Allah," and he answered by saying:

Know, may Allah have mercy on you, that this word is the distinguishing factor between disbelief and Islam. It is the word of piety, the firmest handhold, and it is the word that Abraham, peace be upon him, made a lasting word for his descendants so that they might return.

It does not mean saying it with the tongue while being ignorant of its meaning, for the hypocrites say it while they are below the unbelievers in the lowest level of Hell, even though they pray and give charity. Rather, it means saying it while knowing it in the heart, loving it and loving its people, and hating and opposing whatever contradicts it, as the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace, said: **"Whoever says 'There is no god but Allah sincerely,'"** and in another narration: **"Sincerely from his heart,"** and in another narration: **"Truthfully from his heart,"** and in another hadith: **"Whoever says 'There is no god but Allah and disbelieves in what is worshipped other than Allah,'"** and other hadiths indicating the ignorance of most people of this testimony. Know that this statement is a negation and affirmation of the negation of divinity from all created beings other than Allah Almighty, even Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace, and Gabriel, not to mention other Pious worshippers of Allah and righteous people. If you understand this, then contemplate this divinity that Allah has affirmed for Himself, and denied it for Muhammad, Gabriel, and others, that they should have even the weight of a mustard seed. Know that this divinity is what the common people of our time call the secret and the guardianship. The meaning of god is the guardian in whom is the secret, and he is the one they call the poor man and the Sheikh, and the common people call him the master and the like. This is because they think that Allah has given a status to the elite of creation, and is pleased that man turns to them, hopes in them, and seeks their help, and makes them an intermediary between them and Allah. What the polytheists of our time claim is that they are their intermediaries, and they are the ones the ancients called (the gods), and the intermediary is the god. So, a man's saying, "There is no god but Allah," is the nullification of the intermediaries.

The infidels testify to Allah's monotheism of Lordship.

If you want to fully understand this, you can do so through two things:

First, you must know that the infidels whom the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace, fought, killed, plundered their wealth, and made their women lawful to be taken, were all acknowledging Allah Almighty's monotheism of Lordship, which is that no one creates, provides, gives life, causes death, or manages affairs except Allah alone, as Allah Almighty says:

﴿قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يَدَبِّرُ الْأُمُورَ ۖ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ ۚ﴾

“Say, "Who provides for you from the heaven and the earth? Or who controls hearing and sight and who brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living and who arranges [every] matter?" They will say, "Allah,"" [Yunus: 31]

This is a great and important matter, which is to know that the infidels witness all of this and acknowledge it, yet it did not bring them into Islam, nor did it make their blood and money sacred. They also used to give charity, perform Hajj and Umrah, worship, and refrain from forbidden things out of fear of Allah, the Almighty.

But the **second matter** is what made them infidels and made their blood and money permissible, which is that they did not bear witness to the monotheism of divinity, that no one should be called upon or hoped for except Allah alone, with no partner for Him, and no one should seek help from anyone other than Him, and no one should slaughter for anyone other than Him, and no one should make vows to anyone other than Him, neither to a close angel nor a sent prophet. So whoever seeks help from anyone other than Him has disbelieved, and whoever slaughters for anyone other than Him has disbelieved, and whoever vows to anyone other than Him has disbelieved, and so on.

The polytheists whom the Messenger fought called upon righteous people beside Allah, they disbelieved because of this, despite their affirmation of Allah's monotheism of Lordship.

To complete this, you must recognize that the polytheists whom the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace, fought called upon righteous people such as the angels, Jesus, Ezra, and other saints. They are considered disbelievers in this, even though they acknowledged that Allah is the Creator, Provider, and Controller. When you understand this, you will understand the meaning of "There is no god but Allah." You will also recognize that whoever calls upon a prophet or angel, or calls upon them, or seeks their aid, has left Islam. This is the disbelief for which the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace, fought them.

If a polytheist were to say, **"We know that Allah is the Creator, Provider, and Controller enables these righteous people to be close to him, and we call upon them, make vows to them, enter into their presence, and seek their aid, seeking thereby prestige and intercession. Otherwise, we understand that Allah is the Creator and Controller."** So say: Your statement is the doctrine of Abu Jahl¹ and his ilk. They call upon Jesus, Ezra, the angels, and the saints meaning that, as Allah Almighty said:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَىٰ﴾

"And those who take protectors besides Him [say], "We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position." [Az-Zumar: 3]

And Allah Almighty said:

﴿وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شَفَعَاؤُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ﴾

"And they worship other than Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, "These are our intercessors with Allah"" [Yunus: 18]

¹ Amr ibn Hisham, better known as Abu Jahl was the Meccan Qurayshi polytheist leader of the Mushrikites known for his opposition to the Islamic prophet Muhammad. He was the most prominent flag-bearer of opposition towards Islam.

If you reflect on this carefully, you will realize that the disbelievers bear witness to Allah's monotheism of Lordship, which is His uniqueness in creation, provision, and management, while they slander Jesus, the angels and the saints meaning that they bring them closer to Allah and intercede with Him. You will learn that among the infidels, especially the Christians, there are those who worship Allah day and night, renounce the world, and give in charity whatever they earn from it, secluding themselves in a hermitage from people. Yet, despite this, they are infidels, enemies of Allah. They will remain in Hell forever, because of their belief in Jesus or other saints, calling upon them, sacrificing to them, or making vows to them. This will make clear to you the nature of Islam, to which your Prophet, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace, called. It will also make clear to you that many people are isolated from it, and the meaning of his saying, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace: **“Islam began as something strange, and it will return to being strange as it began.”** So, my brothers, hold fast to the foundation of your religion, its beginning and end, its foundation and its head: the testimony that there is no god but Allah. Know its meaning, love it and love its people, and make them your brothers, even if they are far away, and disbelieve in the Taghut² and be hostile to them and hate them, and hate whoever loves them or argues on their behalf or does not announce them as disbelievers or says I have nothing to do with them or says Allah has not charged me with them, for this person has lied about Allah and fabricated a lie, for Allah has charged him with them and made it obligatory for him to disbelieve in them and disavow them even if they were their brothers and children... So for, Allah, Allah³: hold fast to this so that you may meet your Lord without associating anything with Him. O Allah let us die as Muslims and join us with the righteous people.

² Taghut is everything that a servant exceeds his limits with, whether it is worshipped, followed, or obeyed.

³ Allah, Allah: in Arabic using the word two times in a row is used as a confirmatory technique and to warn you about something after that in the context.

The disbelief of the polytheists of our time is greater than that of those whom the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, fought.

Let us conclude with a verse mentioned by Allah in His Book⁴, which makes clear to you that the disbelief of the polytheists of our time is greater than that of those whom the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace, fought. Allah the Most High said:

﴿وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِي الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَنْ تَدْعُونَ إِلَّا إِلَٰهَهُ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ أَغْرَضْنَاهُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ كَفُورًا﴾

“And when adversity touches you at sea, lost are [all] those you invoke except for Him. But when He delivers you to the land, you turn away [from Him]. And ever is man ungrateful.”[Al-Isra’: 67]

You have heard that Allah, the Exalted, mentioned about the disbelievers that when distress touches them, they abandon their leaders and Sheikhs and do not seek their help. Rather, they are sincere to Allah alone, with no partner, and seek His help alone. But when prosperity comes, they associate others with Allah. You see the polytheists of our time, some of whom may claim to be people of knowledge, ascetics, diligent and worshipful. If Those afflicted with distress may seek help from other than Allah, such as Ma'ruf or Abdul-Qadir al-Jilani, or from more eminent figures such as Zayd ibn al-Khattab and al-Zubayr, and from more eminent figures such as the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family and grant them peace and Allah is the One sought for help. Even greater in sin is that they seek help from Taghut, infidels, and apostates, such as Shamsan, Idris, Yunus, and their likes. And Allah knows best.

Praise be to Allah first and last, and may Allah's prayers and peace be upon the best of His creation, Muhammad, and all his family.

⁴ Quran.